



## COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PROGRAM 2012 – 2013 APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

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**APPLICATION DEADLINE: 11:59PM EST, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2011**

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Community Solutions Program is a professional development program for the best and brightest global community leaders working in Transparency & Accountability; Tolerance/Conflict Resolution; Environmental Issues; **and**, Women's Issues. Sixty-eight eligible individuals will be selected to receive the 2012-2013 Community Solutions Program fellowship and will participate in:

- **A Four-month U.S. Fellowship:** Leaders are placed in U.S. community-based, non-profit or government offices across the U.S. where they work with American community leaders.
- **Community Leadership Institute (CLI):** Leaders will develop practical leadership and organizational management skills through online and in-person training.
- **Follow-on Projects:** Leaders, in partnership with their U.S. host organizations, will develop follow-on community development projects or initiatives to be completed upon return to their home countries.

### FINANCIAL PROVISIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

- J-1 visa support;
- Round-trip travel from participant's home city to the U.S.;
- Accident and sickness insurance; and,
- Living allowance to cover housing, meals and incidentals.

### TECHNICAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Candidates will be considered without respect to race, color, religion, national origin, or gender. Persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply. Competition for the Community Solutions Program is merit-based and open to community leaders, ages 25-38 at the time of application, who meet the following criteria:

- Is from a participating country (U.S. citizens, permanent residents of the U.S. , and individuals who have applied for U.S. permanent residency in the past three years are not eligible for this program);
- Is currently living and working in his/her home country (Individuals participating in academic, training or research programs in the United States at the time of application and individuals residing or working outside their home countries at the time of application are not eligible for this program);
- Is currently working on a community project or initiative in his/her home country; and, has at least two years of community development experience at the time of application;
- Is able to begin the program in the United States in 2012, and is committed to returning to his/her home country for a period of two years after completion of the program;
- Is able to receive a U.S. J-1 visa (Individuals who have participated in an exchange visitor program sponsored or funded by the U.S. Government who have not fulfilled their two-year home residency requirement by the time of application are not eligible for this program); and,
- Is proficient in spoken and written English at the time of application.



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Current IREX employees and consultants and their immediate family members (spouses, parents, children, and siblings) are not eligible to apply for any IREX-implemented grant programs, either as individuals or as the responsible party representing an institutional applicant.

The U.S. Department of State and IREX reserve the right to verify all of the information included in the application. In the event that there is a discrepancy, or information is found to be false, the application will immediately be declared invalid and the applicant ineligible.

Under the terms of the grant and the laws governing the J-1 visa required for participation in the Community Solutions Program, leaders must return to their home country upon completion of the program for a period of at least two years. Leaders are not eligible for visa extensions under any circumstances.

**Applications not meeting the above technical eligibility requirements will not be forwarded to the selection committee.**

### **COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS PROGRAM TIMELINE**

November 7, 2011	Community Solutions Program application deadline
November-December 2012	Interview committees conduct semifinalist interviews
January 2012	Semifinalists take the TOEFL exam as needed
April 2012	Finalists and alternates notified
May-June 2012	Pre-departure orientation and preparation
Late July 2012	All participants depart their home countries for the U.S.
December 2012	Participants return to their home countries and begin follow-on projects
January-June 2013	Alumni complete follow-on projects in collaboration with U.S. hosts

### **SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

The Community Solutions Program is conducted as a merit-based open competition. After the deadline, all eligible applications will be reviewed by a selection panel. Chosen semi-finalists will be interviewed by a panel and will take the TOEFL exam or submit existing TOEFL scores. All applicants will be notified of their status by spring 2012.

Selection panels will use the following criteria to evaluate applications (not in order of importance):

- Working/volunteering on substantive community projects for non-profits, government offices, or community-based organizations; preference will be given to applicants of local organizations.
- Knowledge of and experience in one or more of the four CSP fellowship themes (Women's Issues, Transparency & Accountability, Tolerance/Conflict Resolution, and Environmental Issues);
- Leadership experience and potential;
- Professional and program goals;
- Follow-on project idea;
- Intercultural/English language skills;
- Preference will be given to individuals with four (4) months or more academic exchange or professional training experience in the United States.



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## GENERAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Submit completed Community Solutions Program online application (**paper applications will not be accepted**), and all additional required documents (see below) by the stated deadline.
- Answer all questions on the application in English.
- Include your full, legal name, family name (surname) first as spelled on your international passport (if available). Do not translate name spellings.
- Include complete contact information (including index codes for all addresses and city/country codes for all phone and fax numbers). Do not translate street or city names into English, only into the English alphabet.
- Spaces marked with a red asterisk must be completed. If a required question does not apply to you, enter N/A (not applicable)

## ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

In addition to the completed program application, applicants must submit the following documents through our online application system:

- Current resume or curriculum vitae
- One letter of recommendation from your employer, community organization, or professional peer in your field. Letter must be signed and on organizational letterhead. Letters of recommendation written by the applicant himself/herself will not be accepted.

## PROFESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP THEMES

Applicants must select **ONE** professional theme from the list below that he/she intends to focus on while in the U.S. **The applicant's country of citizenship/residence must be listed under the professional theme below in order for him/her to be eligible for that theme.**

### 1) Transparency and Accountability Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:

- Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- East Asia and the Pacific: Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam
- Europe: Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Romania, and Slovakia
- South and Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

### 2) Tolerance/Conflict Resolution Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:

- Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- South and Central Asia: Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka
- Near East & North Africa: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and West Bank/Gaza
- Western Hemisphere: Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Paraguay, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago

### 3) Environmental Issues Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:

- Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- Near East & North Africa: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and West Bank/Gaza
- South and Central Asia: Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan



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- Western Hemisphere: Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Paraguay, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago

**4) Women's Issues Geographic Regions and Eligible Countries:**

- Africa: Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
- Near East & North Africa: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and West Bank/Gaza
- South and Central Asia: Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan
- Western Hemisphere: Brazil, Dominican Republic, Haiti

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**The deadline for applications for the Community Solutions Program is 11:59pm EST, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2011.** Applications may be submitted **ONLINE ONLY** at <https://oas.irex.org/csp/>. Do not send applications to the IREX office in Washington, DC or any of IREX's representative offices. Mailed, faxed or e-mailed applications will not be accepted.

**IF SELECTED TO THE SEMIFINALIST ROUND, APPLICANTS MUST PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTATION TO IREX AT THE TIME OF THEIR INTERVIEW:**

- A copy of applicant's international passport (if available) or government-issued identification
- Copy of TOEFL score report (if applicable)

*The Community Solutions Program is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State, and implemented by IREX.*



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